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C O N F I D E N T I A L TBILISI 002213

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/26/2018

TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM RU GG

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: DEPUTY FM SAYS OSSETIANS FIRED AT  
GEORGIAN AND POLISH PRESIDENTS; UNVEILS OSCE INITIATIVES

REF: TBILISI 2193

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Acting Foreign Minister Giga Bokeria told the diplomatic corps November 26 that South Ossetian de facto spokesperson Irina Gagloyeva noted on the record that Ossetian forces had fired upon the Georgian and Polish Presidents on November 23 (reftel). The interview with Gagloyeva appeared in the Russian newspaper Kommersant. According to the article, Gagloyeva said that Ossetian "border guards" did not aim at anyone, but opened fire into the air. According to the article, the Ossetians thought the Georgians were provoking them and therefore responded. Bokeria told the diplomatic representatives present that Russian authorities, as the security guarantors, bear responsibility for the incident, and condemned the action as "provocative, disappointing and alarming." He called on the international community to support the return of IDPs to Akhalgori and withdrawals of Russian and Ossetian forces from the region.

¶2. (SBU) Bokeria also announced that Georgia will introduce draft resolutions (emailed to USOSCE and EUR/RPM) for consideration at the Helsinki OSCE Ministerial December 4-5 which address safe return of IDPs, and the prevention of illicit supplies of conventional arms not subject to international verification and observation (septel) to the conflict regions in the OSCE area. In addition, Georgia will circulate a draft statement regarding the August conflict and continuing security situation on the ground, inviting interested OSCE members to agree to sign on in support. (Embassy note. The Georgians noted that Ukraine had used this technique successfully at the 2007 OSCE Ministerial to gain the support of 30 OSCE members for a statement on the Holodomor. End note.) Bokeria asked all OSCE members to consider supporting these resolutions and the statement. He also expressed support for the OSCE mission in Georgia and asked that OSCE members support the extension of the mission's mandate.

TEFFT